

great interest for many people in the question: When will the emperor die ? Many, no doubt, made use of any apparatus of astrology or sorcery to find out. To the emperor and his adherents this seemed to prove a desire that he should die, and was interpreted as treasonable. The Christians helped to develop demonism. They regarded all the heathen gods as demons. As they gained power in society this notion spread, and there was a great revival of popular demonism. By the *lexjidia de Majestate* torture might be applied to persons charged with treason, and the definition of treason was greatly enlarged. Torture was used to great excess under Tiberius and Nero. In the fourth century, after the emperors became Christians, it was feared that persons who hated them would work them ill by sorcery with the aid of the demons, formerly heathen gods. Sorcery and treason were combined and strengthened by a great tide of superstition which overspread the Roman world.¹ The first capital punishment for heresy in the Christian church seems to have been the torture and burning of Priscillian, a Manichaeon, at Treves, in 385, with six of his adherents, by the Emperor Maximus. This act caused a sensation of truly Christian horror. Of the two bishops who were responsible, one was expelled from his see; the other resigned.² In 579 King Chilperic caused ecclesiastics to be tortured for disloyal behavior. About 580 the same king, having married a servant maid, an act which caused family and political trouble, upon the death of two of her children, caused a woman to be tortured who was charged with murdering the children in the interest of their stepbrother. She confessed, revoked her confession, and was burned. Three years later

another child of
the queen died, and several women were tortured
and burned or
broken on the wheel for causing the death by
sorcery.³ Pope
Nicholas I, in 866, opposed the use of torture as
barbaric,
and the pseudo-Isidorian Decretals take the same
position in
regard to it. Indeed, that was the orthodox
Christian view in
the dark ages.

¹ Gibbon, Chap. XVII; Hansen, *Zauberwahn*, etc., 108.

² Heyer, *Priesterschaft und Inquisition*, > 16-18; Lea, *Inquisition*, I, Chap. V.

³ Hansen, *Zauberwahn und Inquisition und Hexenprozess im M. A.*, no, 113.